

The University of Edinburgh in partnership with the National Theatre of Scotland in association with the Traverse Theatre



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

News Release

Issued: Tuesday, 5 May 2014

Game shows, gangsters and online dating add drama to longlist

The longlist for a drama prize associated with Britain's oldest literary awards is announced today (Wednesday 6 May).

The 14 nominations for the James Tait Black Prize for Drama – chosen from more than 180 plays world-wide – showcase a range of diverse productions from a mix of new and established writers.

The drama prize was launched in 2012 by the University of Edinburgh in partnership with the National Theatre Scotland and in association with the Traverse Theatre.

This year the longlist includes plays by writers from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland as well as from the US and Canada. There is a repeat nomination for Dawn King (a runner up last year for her play *Foxfinder*), and an unprecedented double nomination for Aditi Brennan Kapil for parts I and II of her US trilogy of plays about displaced Hindu Gods.

Scottish playwrights win the most nominations, with plays by David Harrower, David Leddy Rob Drummond and AJ Taudevin on the longlist.

Contemporary themes explored in the 14 plays include counterfeiters, TV Quiz shows and child abuse, online dating, surveillance, gangsters, pornography and immigration.

Judges award the £10,000 prize to the best new English-speaking play, which they consider demonstrates an original theatrical voice and makes a significant contribution to the art form.

There will be an award ceremony at the Traverse Theatre on 11 August at 6pm, which the public are welcome to attend. The event will be hosted by Joyce McMillan, one of the UK's most esteemed arts writers and theatre critics. As well as the presentation of the James Tait Black Prize for Drama to the winner, there will be an opportunity to hear extracts from the three short listed plays, read by a company of actors and produced by the National Theatre of Scotland.

The longlisted plays are:

- *Grounded* by George Brant, produced by The Gate Theatre, London,
- *The Chronicles of Kalki* by Aditi Brennan Kapil, produced by Mixed Blood Theatre, Minneapolis. Staged as Part I of a trilogy called *Displaced Hindu Gods* by Aditi Brennan Kapil,
- *Brahman/I* by Aditi Brennan Kapil, produced by Mixed Blood Theatre. Part II of *Displaced Hindu Gods*
- *Quiz Show* by Rob Drummond, produced by Traverse Theatre Company
- *Ciara* by David Harrower, produced by Traverse Theatre Company and Datum Point Productions
- *Ciphers* by Dawn King, an Out of Joint, Bush Theatre and Exeter Northcott Theatre co-production
- *Sequence* by Arun Lakra, produced by Downstage Theatre and Hit & Myth
- *Long Live the Little Knife* by David Leddy, originally commissioned and presented by Fire Exit Ltd at Tramway, Glasgow
- *Cannibals* by Rory Mullarkey, produced by the Royal Exchange, Manchester
- *Desolate Heaven* by Ailis Ni Riain, produced by Theatre 503
- *Three Birds* by Janice Okoh, Produced by The Royal Exchange Theatre in association with the Bush Theatre.
- *Perfect Match* by Gary Owen, produced by Paines Plough and Oran Mor, Glasgow
- *Some Other Mother* by AJ Taudevin, produced in association with The Tron Theatre in Glasgow, Scottish Refugee Council & supported by Stellar Quines & On Fife
- *Fleabag* by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, produced by DryWrite Theatre Company

The drama prize was launched in 2012 by the University of Edinburgh in partnership with the National Theatre Scotland and in association with Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre.

Last year the prize was awarded to Tim Price for his acclaimed play *The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning*.

Neil Murray, Executive Producer at The National Theatre of Scotland said: "It is a very exciting longlist of plays, all of which have had a major impact on audiences. I very much look forward to the challenge of selecting a winner."

Member of the judging panel Nicola McCartney, a playwright and lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, said: "The James Tait Black Awards are renowned for showcasing the very best of literature and we are delighted to celebrate the work of playwrights for a second year.

"The longlist is incredibly diverse and each play is of a remarkably high standard – it will be no mean feat to choose a shortlist."

Linda Crooks, Executive Producer at the Traverse Theatre said: "It is thrilling for Traverse Theatre Company to not only be represented in the nominations for this year's James Tait Black Award but the longlist also shows the Traverse Theatre is the platform for hosting the best in British drama. It is a privilege to host this event and honour these talented playwrights."

The drama prize is judged by postgraduate students and academics from the University of Edinburgh. The shortlist will be announced in July 2014.

Further information on National Theatre Scotland can be found at:

www.nationaltheatrescotland.com

For further information and images please contact:

Kathryn Dunlop, Press and PR Office, tel 0131 651 5587; email kathryn.dunlop@ed.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The National Theatre of Scotland is supported by the Scottish Government. Since its launch in February 2006, the National Theatre of Scotland has been involved in creating over 204 productions in 182 different locations. With no building of its own, the Company takes theatre all over Scotland and beyond, working with existing and new venues and companies to create and tour theatre of the highest quality. It takes place in the great buildings of Scotland, but also in site-specific locations, airports and tower blocks, community halls and drill halls, ferries and forests. The Company has performed to over 1, 000,000 people across four continents.
www.nationaltheatrescotland.com